

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph at page 1, line 23 through page 2, line 6 as follows:

In a system for selling and buying merchandise using a network, a method of making a buyer search for and select a seller on a Web results in a waste of time and communication cost in finding out a seller who offers desired merchandise at low cost. It is almost impossible to select an optimal seller from among an enormous amount of information ~~of~~ on a network. In addition, in a so-called reverse auction scheme in which a seller accepts or declines a buyer's bid, the seller must make a decision for the request of each individual user, resulting in an overload on the seller side.

Please amend the paragraph at page 3, lines 12-27, as follows:

An electronic bid system according to the present invention ~~is an electronic bid system for allowing~~ allows a service provider to serve as an agent in a sales transaction between a buyer and a seller via a network, ~~characterized by comprising~~ and includes purchase merchandise/ service information processing means comprised of means for storing merchandise/service information to be purchased by a buyer and means for notifying a seller of the number of potential buyers for each merchandise/ service on the basis of the merchandise/service information to be purchased and stored in the storing means, and sales merchandise/service information processing means comprised of means for notifying the service provider of a sales condition determined by the seller and means for notifying the buyer of the sales condition notified from the seller.

Please amend the paragraph at page 5, lines 8-15 as follows:

According to the present invention, once the buyers' requests are stored in the database of the service provider, only macro data, i.e., the merchandise category and the

number of potential users (quantity of merchandise) are disclosed. This allows the seller to make bids for ~~some~~ a defined quantity. The seller conveniently need not make a bid for each individual buyer, ~~resulting in convenience~~.

Please amend the paragraph at page 6, lines 22-26 as follows:

FIG. 2 is a flow chart showing processing of an electronic bid scheme according to the present invention. FIG. 3 ~~is a conceptual view showing~~ shows the data format of the flow of data exchanged between a buyer, seller, and service provider.

Please amend the paragraph at page 7, lines 17-24 as follows:

In step ~~S3~~ S2 of FIG. 2, buyer's purchase request information is registered. More specifically, as shown in FIG. 5, each user accesses the predetermined Web page of the service provider and registers purchase request merchandise/service information. This information may be registered by a method of sending information in a predetermined format using electronic mail.

Please amend the paragraph at page 7, line 25 through page 8, line 13 as follows:

In step ~~S5~~ S3 of FIG. 2, a database is constructed and disclosed. More specifically, the service provider constructs a database for the number of potential buyers for the merchandise/services of a specific category on the basis of the purchase request merchandise/service information (number of merchandise items) transmitted from the users. A database to be disclosed is customized for each seller. The merchandise/service information is disclosed to a seller within the range of the category of merchandise in which the seller deals. A method of disclosing a database is shown in FIG. 5. That is, a seller

accesses the service provider, and browses a Web page constructed for each seller.

Alternatively, a seller is notified of the database by the service provider via electronic mail.

Please amend the paragraph at page 8, line 14 through page 9, line 2 as follows:

In step S7 S4 of FIG. 2, merchandize providing information is notified. That is, a seller determines merchandize/service providing conditions, i.e., a price, merchandize specifications, and purchase method on the basis of the revised information of the database, its own stock, and purchasing price. The service provider is notified of the determined merchandize providing information. More specifically, as shown in FIG. 5, the seller prepares merchandize providing information mail including the merchandize specifications, price, purchasing method, and transmission request message and sends it to the service provider. Note that the merchandize providing information may be notified not by sending electronic mail but by inputting the information on the Web page provided by the service provider.

Please amend the paragraph at page 9, lines 3-21 as follows:

In step S7 S4 of FIG. 2, ~~the merchandize providing information is notified. That is,~~ all the potential buyers for the merchandize/services of the category of interest are notified of the merchandize providing information of the seller from the service provider. The merchandize providing information may be notified by sending electronic mail or writing the information on the Web page prepared for only each potential buyer. Similarly, each potential buyer is notified of merchandize providing information from other sellers. The number of potential buyers in the database for each seller is cleared when the merchandize providing information is notified from each seller. Each seller only presents the merchandize providing information to each potential buyer at this time. The number of potential buyers on

the database can always be new information which represents those who have not presented merchandize providing information to new potential buyers.

Please amend the paragraph at page 9, line 22 through page 10, line 3 as follows:

In step S9 S5 of FIG. 2, a sales agreement is made. That is, as shown in FIG. 3, each user browses the merchandize providing information provided by one or more sellers, checks the sales conditions of the respective sellers, and determines the best seller. The user directly accesses the determined seller via the Web page, electronic mail, telephone, or FAX. A sales agreement is made between the user and seller.

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, lines 4-11 as follows:

Note that once a sales agreement is made, the buyer notifies the service provider of cancellation of ~~[[the]] continued~~ purchasing will. The service provider deletes the database information concerning this buyer. The remaining sellers who can make no sales agreement with this user can know that a sales agreement has been made with another seller by browsing the database of the service provider.